

NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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THE PASSENGER IN THE LOWER BERTH

OR A STARTLING DISAPPEARANCE
FROM A RAILROAD CAR



BY
THE AUTHOR OF
NICK CARTER

THE SLEEPING-CAR CONDUCTOR WAS SEEN SNEAKING OUT OF THE LOWER BERTH.

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THE PASSENGER IN THE LOWER BERTH;

OR,

A Startling Disappearance from a Railroad Sleeping-Car.

By the Author of "NICK CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LESTER KINGDON.

"It is the most puzzling case of disappearance I ever heard of, Mr. Carter."

These words were addressed to America's greatest detective by an assistant manager of the Sleeping-Car Company's office in New York.

Nick had been summoned to his presence in a private office of the B. and O. Railway building in the lower part of the city.

He had inquired what was the nature of the business on which he had been summoned, and the official's reply was as above quoted.

"Who has disappeared?"

"A young New Yorker named Lester Kingdon."

"When did he disappear?"

"Some time last night between midnight and morning."

"Where was he last seen?"

"On the sleeping-car Domerset running as part of train No. 514 of the B. and O. road from Washington to New York."

"Suppose you put me in possession of as many of the facts of the case as are known to you," suggested the detective.

"That is soon done, Mr. Carter. As I said, Mr. Kingdon was returning to New York from a business trip to Washington.

"He occupied lower berth number six, and retired about twelve o'clock, or soon after the train left Washington. When the train approached Jersey City this morning and the porter called the passengers, lower six was empty.

"The occupant was gone, but his clothes and valise were there.

"It was first believed that he was in the toilet room.

"But as the train entered Jersey City and he did not show up, the conviction spread that something was wrong.

"In short, the man disappeared suddenly and mysteriously."

"Mr. Kingdon was a small man," said Nick, as if addressing a fact to himself.

"Oh! then you knew him?"

"Never saw him in my life."

"Surely I didn't mention his size."

"No, but one of my assistants did."

"You see," continued Nick, "my assistant, Patsy, was in Washington yesterday attending to some business. He came home on the sleeper Domerset, and gathered up a few pointers on the spot without disclosing his identity or profession."

"How fortunate! Then he may help you materially."

"That is possible. I shall want to see somebody who is acquainted with the business which called Kingdon to the capital."

"That is easily arranged. His partner, Eugene White, is in the outer office. We thought you would like to talk with him."

"Then I shall want to ask a few questions of the porter of the car and the sleeping-car conductor."

"They, too, are outside."

"Have you questioned any of the three?"

"No. Mr. White just arrived a moment before you came, and we thought it best to wait and let you do the questioning."

"That's good. You did well. I will see Mr. White first."

That gentleman was summoned from the outer office.

He was a man of middle age, large in frame, stocky of build, dark complexioned, with a full set of black, bushy whiskers, and he almost constantly wore spectacles.

It was plain to be seen that Eugene White was much excited over the disappearance of his partner.

"Mr. White," said the railroad official, as the gentleman entered, "this is Nick Carter, the detective. We have summoned him to

take up the mystery surrounding your partner, and we hope it will meet with your approval."

"It does, I assure you. Nick Carter can solve the riddle if any one can."

He extended his hand to the detective who greeted him warmly.

"It is necessary, Mr. White, for me to be informed of certain things concerning Kingdon and his affairs before I can go ahead intelligently in the case."

"I know! I know! Anything in my power to tell you is at your command," was the unhesitating response.

"What is your business?"

"Lawyers and solicitors."

"How long has Kingdon been your partner?"

"About two years; since the death of the senior member of the firm. Kingdon was a clerk in the office then. So I took him into a nominal partnership."

"How nominal?"

"Well, his name appears as one of the firm, but he still remains on a salary."

"Not a large salary, I presume?" ventured Nick.

"Fair, but I fear not enough to make life exactly easy for him since his marriage."

"He is married, then?"

"Yes."

"And his wife knows?"

"No. She is out of town. We have not notified her. Perhaps I should tell you——"

White hesitated as if he feared he had made a blunder.

"You should tell me everything which might lead me in my investigations, Mr. White," declared Nick, as he looked at the lawyer sharply.

"Well, I don't believe Kingdon's marriage was a happy one. Indeed, I know it was not."

"He told you so?"

"Oh, no! But I could see. When he married, soon after he became my partner, his wife was supposed to be an heiress.

"Then her father suddenly failed—lost every dollar he had in the world, and died from the effect of his misfortune.

"It was that circumstance which let me into the secret of Kingdon's loveless marriage. Since then he has not tried to conceal from me his disgust of his position.

"Kingdon was inclined to be a high roller. That is, he loved to spend money and didn't like his profession too well on account of its exacting requirements.

"Besides, it took most of his salary to keep his wife at Lakewood, a fashionable winter resort, or at some watering place in summer. Yet he gave up the bulk of his income to keep her away from him."

"In a word," said Nick, "he fished for an heiress and hooked a tartar."

"That's about it, and he seemed of late to worry over it exceedingly."

"Do you think there could have been another woman in it?"

"I think not. Kingdon never cared for women, and I knew when he married that it must be for money. He loved money for what it would buy, but was a woman hater."

"What is your theory of the disappearance?"

"I have none. It might be suicide, insanity, or foul play."

"You do not believe it could have been a case of voluntary disappearance?"

"Certainly not."

"He was honest?"

"I've never known him to do a dishonest act."

"And how long have you known him?"

"Since he entered the office, a boy of twelve."

"How old is he, if he is still alive?"

"About twenty-five."

"Why was he in Washington?"

"He went in answer to a telegram from a client—Donald Ogden, the retired broker."

"What was Ogden's business with Kingdon?"

"I don't know. The telegram merely said, 'Send Kingdon or come yourself at once. Important.'"

"I sent Kingdon. He went down by the train night before last. That was the last I saw or heard of him. I have telegraphed to Ogden, and expect a reply soon. It will be brought here when it comes."

"Humph! I am told that Kingdon's clothes and valise were found in his berth. Where are they now?"

"We have them here," answered the railroad official. "The conductor and porter brought everything left behind just as they were found in his berth. Shall I produce them?"

"If you please."

The official unlocked a door of a small closet and brought forth a large valise or hand trunk and a package of bulky size. He set the hand trunk on the floor and placed the bundle on a flat table.

Then he cut the string and opened the latter.

Nick noticed that White had adjusted his glasses and stared at the hand trunk longer than seemed natural. When the lawyer's eyes left that article they were fixed upon the contents of the bundle.

These were a man's coat, vest, trousers, underclothes, collar, cuffs, tie, shoes, socks, watch, revolver, hat and pocket-book.

"He doesn't seem to have taken much with him," mused Nick.

"You see, whatever became of him he had nothing on but his nightshirt. He always went to bed in a sleeper just as if he were at home," explained White.

"Have you examined the pockets of the clothes?" asked the detective.

"No. They have not been disturbed."

"Then suppose, Mr. White, you see what is in them."

White acted on the advice, and the contents of all the pockets were emptied on the table.

There was a bunch of keys, some important business letters, a pocket-knife, several cigars, a lead pencil and a memoranda book.

Nick watched White while the examination was going on. He noticed that the latter dropped the bunch of keys into his own pocket.

"You want to keep those keys, Mr. White?" he asked.

"Not the bunch, perhaps. Only those which belong to the office and—the safe. I should feel easier if they were in my possession, though I know they would be safe in your keeping, Mr. Carter."

He had produced the bunch again and handed them to Nick.

"I want only the key which will open that big valise or hand trunk, Mr. White," he said, taking them and looking the bunch over. "Ah! this is it, I think."

As he turned toward the large leather receptacle, he hesitated, looked over his shoulder, and addressed White:

"By the way, isn't this a rather large traveling bag for so short a journey?"

"I had the same thought," acknowledged White. "I've never known him to carry that affair unless he was going to be absent more than a few days, or had use for a dress suit."

Without reply, Nick opened the portable trunk, and as he stepped back, exclaimed:

"Well, there's your dress suit."

Sure enough. His words were true.

"What on earth did he want with a dress suit on that trip? Why, he went one night and came back the next."

"His intentions originally may have been

to have stayed longer," suggested the railroad official.

"Well, he didn't take it along for nothing," remarked Nick.

"I should like to keep the valise and its contents in my possession for a short time," he added, turning to White.

"Why, certainly," was the response.

Nick then picked up the pocket-book and examined the contents. There was little in it except fifteen dollars in bills.

"That surprises me," declared White, as he saw Nick count out the money.

"Why?" was the detective's inquiry.

"I know that he had more than five hundred dollars when he left for Washington."

"But here is his watch and the pocket-book with these small bills in it. They were found under his pillow, I suppose?"

"That's right," nodded the railroad official.

"But he couldn't have spent much money in so short a time," persisted White.

Before Nick could make a reply, there was a knock on the door, and a messenger handed in a telegram.

"It is for you, Mr. White," said Nick, who had received it.

"Ah! now we shall get news of Kingdon while he was in Washington. It is from Ogden, I presume."

The lawyer eagerly tore off the envelope. As his eyes scanned the words of the message, his face paled.

"Great heavens, gentlemen!" he cried.

"What does this mean?"

Nick took the message. It read:

"Donald Ogden died here last night. Can you notify his son?"

It was signed by the manager of a prominent Washington hotel.

"Donald Ogden dead!" exclaimed Nick, "and there is not one line or word left by Lester Kingdon to tell us what passed be-

tween him and Ogden on his visit to the capital."

Then he stooped, locked the big valise, shoved it aside with one foot, and indulged in a silent chuckle unknown to any one of those who were watching him.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERIOUS PASSENGER IN UPPER SIX.

"We will now hear what the sleeping-car conductor has to tell us," said Nick, addressing his remarks to the railroad official.

The latter went to the door and called:

"Step in here a moment, Thorne."

A man wearing the uniform of the sleeping-car conductor entered, cap in hand.

Nick gave him a sweeping glance, and saw a good-looking, dark-featured man about five feet six tall, and slimly built. His hair was close-cut, and a heavy, drooping black mustache was the only adornment of a rather pale face.

"Thorne," said his superior, as soon as the door behind him was closed, "this is Nick Carter. I suppose you have heard of him before?"

"Who is there that has not?" responded the conductor.

"Now, Mr. Thorne," proceeded Nick, without delay, "as soon as we learn all that there is to know about this disappearance, maybe we can discover what became of Lester Kingdon. So let's get right down to business.

"First, are you sure it was Lester Kingdon who occupied lower six last night?"

"I know it was a man who calls himself Lester Kingdon. He told me several months ago that it was his name and gave me his card."

"Where?"

"On the train. He has gone over the road with me perhaps twenty times during the last year."

"That's right," interjected White. "We've a great deal of business in Baltimore and Washington, and Kingdon has invariably attended to it."

"Suppose, to make sure of the identity, you describe him," suggested Nick.

"He was about my size, light complexion, light hair, and smooth face."

"No beard or mustache?"

"No, sir; not the sign of either. His face looked so smooth that I sometimes wondered if he ever shaved, and no one would take him to be much more than a boy."

"Oh, there is no doubt about it having been Kingdon!" exclaimed White. "The description is perfect."

"And you seem to have known him pretty well," continued Nick, addressing the conductor.

"Yes, sir. He and I became pretty fairly friendly, and talked together considerable from time to time. He went down with me night before last, and started back last night. I talked with him as the train was leaving Washington. He asked me to do something for him."

"What?"

"Requested that I keep a lookout and notice whether a man with a close-cut red beard and sandy hair, dressed in a brown suit, with brown sack coat and a gray Alpine hat, got on the train at Baltimore, and to let him know after we left that city."

"Well?"

"I kept a pretty good watch for such a person, but none passed through the gates.

"Just before we pulled out I went to the guard fence to speak to the depot master, and as I glanced out into the waiting-room of the Camden street station, I caught a glimpse of a man passing out to the street who I thought, so far as I could notice by the short view I had, answered the description."

"Then what?"

"I informed Kingdon of what I saw, when I returned to the car, after the train started."

"What did he say?"

"Merely thanked me and requested not to be disturbed until barely time to get dressed for Jersey City."

"He had retired?"

"Yes."

"You noticed nothing strange about his berth during the rest of the night."

"No, sir; for after turning over my tickets to the train conductor, I went into the small stateroom, which was not taken on that trip, closed the door, and sat down to smoke. I want to acknowledge right here that I fell asleep soon afterward and didn't wake till we got almost to Philadelphia."

"Is that your usual custom?"

"By no means. I am usually awake during my entire trip. I sleep in the daytime at each end of the route. I can't understand why I dropped off, for, although I lost my usual sleep yesterday, I didn't feel the effect of it when I went into that stateroom to smoke."

"Oh, you did not get your usual sleep yesterday, then?"

"No, sir."

"How so?"

"I had an engagement with Mr. Kingdon, which kept me going."

"What was it?"

"He asked me to call on him at his hotel in Washington at eleven o'clock and go out to Mt. Pleasant to look at a piece of property he wanted to buy."

"That's strange," muttered White.

"And did you go with him?" asked Nick.

"Not at that hour. When I called at eleven, he said he was detained, and asked me to call again at two o'clock."

"I did so, and then we took the trip in a two-horse buggy."

"You went to Mt. Pleasant?"

"No; he took another direction, and we drove over to Alexandria. On the way he told me he had come down prepared to pay five thousand dollars spot cash for the piece of property, but heard after his arrival that the owner had gone to Chicago."

"Inconceivable!" muttered White. "What did he mean? Kingdon couldn't have controlled that much cash had he made the effort."

"I beg your pardon," said Thorne, "but he had a very large sum with him. It might not have been so much, but it was quite a roll and the wrapper was a five-hundred dollar bill."

"You noticed this large valise?" asked Nick.

"I did."

"Did he explain to you why he carried it on such a short trip?"

"No. I didn't ask, and he didn't explain."

Nick's next question took everybody by surprise.

"Who occupied the upper berth of section six?"

"Why, nobody."

"Sure?"

"Quite sure. No upper berths were occupied. There were two lowers empty."

"And no uppers were made up?"

"Oh, I don't know about that, sir. Usually we have a few uppers prepared in case of an overflow to the Baltimore car. But last night the trip was light and the Baltimore car's lowers were not filled, either."

"That will do for the present, Mr. Thorne. But don't go away. We may want to see you again."

As soon as Thorne left the room the porter was called in.

That individual appeared in the person of a heavy-set negro, perhaps thirty years of

age, dressed in the usual uniform of a sleeping-car porter. He seemed decidedly uncomfortable in the presence of the little company.

Nick Carter's eyes scarcely left the porter's face while he asked his questions. The great detective was engaged in taking one of his famous mind pictures, which were always as true to nature as the best photographic artist could make a portrait.

"What is your name, my man?" began Nick.

"George Brooks, sah, but I'm called 'Dad' sometimes."

"Did you know Lester Kingdon?"

"De gen'leman as disappeared las' night? Oh! yaas, sah, I knowed him. He trabled with us right offen."

"When did you see him last?"

"When he done went to bed 'bout twelve o'clock."

"Saw nothing of him afterward?"

"No, sah."

"Where were you most of the time after the train left Baltimore until it got to Philadelphia?"

"In the smokin'-room, sah, blackin' de gen'lemen's shoes."

"Where was the sleeping-car conductor during this time?"

"I don't know, sah, whar he wur all de time. He passed t'rough into de day coach oncet, but I didn't see him come back. Next I see him wur at Philumdelphy."

"Where was the train when you saw Mr. Thorne go forward into the day coach?"

"We wur crossin' the high bridge ober de Susquehanna at Habre de Grace."

"You're sure it was he?"

"Lor' bress ye, yaas. I passed him jes' as he wur comin' from de aisle, and saw him unlock de doah an' go on t'rough."

"Have you any idea what became of Mr. Kingdon?"

"Good Lor', no, sah! He jes' seemed to be whisked away."

"Couldn't have walked out of the car?"

"Not without help, sah."

"Why not?"

"Case de vesterbule doahs on de platfo'ms at each end ob de cah wur found fassened on de inside; and ef he'd hab walked t'rough de day coach in his night shirt some body'd hab seed him shoo!"

"The windows?"

"Dey wur shet, sah. He couldn't hab jumped out and shet 'em after him."

All these facts Nick knew were true, because Patsy had so reported.

"Who occupied upper six, Brooks?"

The porter's eyes blinked a score of times to the second before he answered.

"Uppah six, sah? Why, nobody, sah—jest nobody."

"Had you any upper berth passengers last night?"

"No, sah."

"Were there any upper berths made up?"

"Seberal wur, sah. We always makes up a few in de center ob de cah, in case ob a rush at Baltimo'."

"But they were not needed last night?"

"No, sah."

"Your coach is next to the day coach?"

"To one ob dem, sah. Dere am two day cahs."

"And the door at that end of the Domeset is always kept locked?"

"Yaas, sah, fo' de puppose ob keepin' out dem as hab no business nosin' 'roun' sleepin'-cahs."

"The door was locked last night, I presume?"

"Ob co'se, sah."

"Did Thorne lock it after him when he passed through?"

"I dun forgot to notice, but I reckon he did. I'll ax him if you say so."

"Better not. Thorne might resent your meddling. I'll ask him myself. I think that will do for the present, Brooks. But don't go away. We may want to ask for more information."

After Brooks went out, White said, rather excitedly:

"Mr. Carter, one of those men is lying."

"It looks that way, doesn't it?" smiled the detective.

"Thorne says he slept all the way to Philadelphia. Brooks says Thorne went into the day coach as the train was crossing the Susquehanna, midway between the two cities."

"Then who lies?"

"In that instance we'll not decide. But the porter lied in another case."

"How so?"

"He said he had no upper berth passenger last night."

"So did Thorne say so."

"True; but Thorne may have been deceived. The negro couldn't have been."

"And there was an upper berth passenger?" asked the railroad manager.

"Yes. He occupied upper six."

"How did you find it out?"

"Don't forget that one of my assistants was on the train."

"And he saw——"

"He saw the porter place the ladder opposite number six shortly after the train crossed the bay at Baltimore."

"The porter then went forward to the smoking-room. Five minutes later some one came in from that end of the coach, mounted by the stepladder to upper six, and pulled the curtains together."

"Several minutes later still the porter removed the ladder and once more retired to the smoking compartment."

"My assistant at the time thought nothing about it."

"When Kingdon's absence was discovered next morning he thought about the occupant of upper six, but on glancing at the berth, it appeared to have been undisturbed."

"Now, gentlemen, I have no doubt the occupant of upper six left the coach as mysteriously as he entered it."

"He knows a good deal about what happened to Kingdon."

"I must find that missing occupant of upper six before I can find the man who occupied the lower berth."

"Thorne and Brooks should be placed under arrest until they show, if they can, that they are not concerned in Kingdon's disappearance," excitedly declared White.

"Not at all!" replied Nick. "I can use them to better advantage, with your assistance," addressing the railroad manager.

"I am wholly at your command," said that official.

"Then at the last moment to-night I want Thorne and Brooks separated, and sent to Washington by different routes. Can it be done?"

"Easily. I can transfer one to the Pennsylvania road."

"Then let it be the porter who is transferred. Say nothing to Thorne about it, and I'll have a porter on hand for him whom he will not suspect to be other than Brooks."

"What does that mean, Mr. Carter?" asked the railroad official, showing the puzzled state of his mind by the expression of his face.

"It means that I want to have both men watched as they go back to Washington to-night," said Nick. "For that purpose I shall furnish Thorne with a porter for his Baltimore and Ohio car, and I will provide a conductor for the negro, Brooks' Pennsylvania car."

"I will use my two assistants, Chick and

Patsy, as the substitutes. Patsy will be made up to so closely resemble the negro, Brooks, that Conductor Thorne will not suspect the deception, and Chick's resemblance to Thorne will easily deceive the negro porter.

"In this way Thorne will believe that he has the real Brooks with him, as usual, on his trip, and the real Brooks will believe that Thorne has been transferred with him to the Pennsylvania road.

"So Patsy will be in a position to discover whether there was collusion between Thorne and Brooks, and Chick will be in the same position of advantage to find out the same thing from the porter.

"I, myself," continued Nick, "will go to Washington this afternoon. When my conductor and my porter meet me there to-morrow and make their reports, I may be able to decide what has become of your partner, Mr. White, or at least whether there is collusion between Thorne and Brooks."

At two o'clock Nick left for Washington.

When the midnight train on the Pennsylvania road left Jersey City for the South, Chick, disguised so as to closely resemble Thorne, and dressed in the uniform of a sleeping-car conductor, had charge of the Washington sleeper, and "Dad" Brooks was on hand to act as porter.

A little later the B. and O. train pulled out of the New Jersey Central Depot. Thorne was in charge, as usual. He would have sworn that "Dad" Brooks was making up the berths in the Washington car.

But Brooks' counterfeit was none other than Patsy, whom Nick Carter had transformed into a living image of the genuine article from the memory picture of Brooks which he took away from the conference room that morning.

Patsy had studied Brooks' peculiarities on the way up from Washington the night

before, and had little trouble in keeping up his share of the deception.

It was one of Nick Carter's clever schemes, and, as usual, startling results were the outcome.

CHAPTER III.

NURSE MARY ISABEL ALSO DISAPPEARS.

Nick arrived at the Pennsylvania depot in Washington shortly after eight o'clock that night. Twenty minutes later he was at the hotel.

He didn't register, but the head clerk on duty, who knew him well, assigned the great detective to two fine rooms on the second floor.

"What's up now?" inquired the clerk in a cautious undertone, as he rang for a bell-boy to show Nick up-stairs.

"Come to my room as soon as you can and I'll tell you," responded the detective.

Ten minutes later the clerk and Nick were behind closed doors in the latter's private parlor.

"Of course I know you never come to Washington except on business," explained the clerk. "So you must pardon my curiosity."

"That I can readily do," was the business-like response, "since by gratifying your curiosity I may get you, at the same time, to aid me."

"How can I aid you?"

"We will see presently. Donald Ogden, the New York broker, died in this hotel recently."

"Yes, last night. Surely his death was from natural causes?"

"I have no reason to doubt it. The body is still here?"

"Oh, yes. His son will arrive to-night some time, and take charge. It will be buried to-morrow afternoon, probably, or the next day."

"Where? In Washington or New York?"

"Oh, here, of course. Ogden lived here formerly. He married in this city. His son was born here, and his mother is buried in Washington. But——"

"Who was with him when he died?"

"A professional nurse and his physician."

"What was the cause of death?"

"Heart trouble of some kind."

"He was very ill?"

"Yes. Took to his bed a week ago, soon after he arrived from New York. Became very bad, and had two trained nurses, one or the other of which was with him all the time."

"He had a visitor yesterday?"

"Not that I know of."

Nick looked at the clerk intently for some time after this answer. Apparently he concluded that the latter was speaking truly.

"You know Lester Kingdon, of New York?"

"Intimately. He always stops here when in Washington. He was here yesterday."

"And started for New York last night?"

"Oh, no. He left for the South on the eight o'clock train last evening."

"That's what he told you?"

"Yes. I ordered a cab and had him driven to the depot."

"What time did he leave the hotel?"

"About seven-thirty."

"You are sure he went to the depot?"

"Why, I suppose so. He started for that train, and the cabman never said anything different."

"Can I see the cabman?"

"Certainly. I'll send for him."

"Not immediately. First let me tell you that Kingdon left by the eleven-thirty train for New York, but never reached Jersey City."

"Eh? Why, where did he go?"

"We don't know. That is why I am here in Washington; trying to trace him."

Nick then hastily and briefly related the main incidents in the mysterious case.

"We know he came here in answer to a telegram from Donald Ogden," concluded Nick.

"That's queer," mused the clerk. "I was on duty when he came in—was on till eight o'clock, and he never said a word about Ogden or inquired for him."

"You have no knowledge of his visiting the sick room?"

"None."

"You say one of the two nurses was always at Ogden's bedside?"

"Yes. The doctor's instructions to them were not to leave him alone a moment."

"Who was his physician?"

"Dr. Morse, of K street."

"Now, if you will send for the cabman who drove Kingdon away from the hotel last evening, I'll be obliged."

The clerk rang a bell, and told the boy who answered it to find Cabman James and send him to the room.

They didn't have to wait long till the cabman appeared, hat in hand.

"James," inquired the clerk, "where did you leave your fare whom you drove away at half-past seven last evening?"

"Why, at the Pennsylvania depot, sor?"

The clerk looked at Nick curiously.

The detective arose and asked James:

"Is your cab handy?"

"It's at the dure, sor."

"Then I want you to drive me to Dr. Morse's office in K street."

Nick was fortunate in finding the doctor at home. He lost no time in introducing himself.

"I am looking for a gentleman who disappeared after visiting this city, doctor," said Nick. "I have reason to know that he came to Washington in response to a telegram from your late patient. I can get no

assurance from the hotel people that he saw Mr. Ogden yesterday, however, so I come to you."

"Nobody saw Ogden yesterday of my knowledge," said Dr. Morse, positively.

"Was he forbidden by you to see visitors?"

"No."

"Was he aware of his dangerous condition?"

"He was—during the last few days. Day before yesterday he forced me to tell him that his present attack might prove fatal."

"He asked you about it?"

"Yes."

"I would like to see his nurses. If he had a visitor yesterday, one or the other would know it?"

"Certainly. Unfortunately, I can direct you to only one of the two."

"Which?"

"The other has disappeared."

"When did she disappear?"

"She was relieved by her assistant at noon yesterday and should have returned at six o'clock for duty until midnight, but she didn't. Indeed, no one has seen her since."

"She was on duty yesterday noon?"

"Yes, from six o'clock till twelve."

"What was her name?"

"Mary Isabel."

"Where does she live?"

"She boarded somewhere on Maryland Avenue. She had no regular home."

"What do you know concerning her, doctor?"

"About four months ago she applied to the hospital here in Washington for a position as assistant nurse, and was put to work. She knew almost nothing of the duties required of a nurse, but was so attentive and so apt at learning that she was retained."

"I met her at the hospital during my professional visits, and was most favorably impressed with the young woman."

"On the day after I was first called to see Donald Ogden at the hotel Miss Isabel came to my office and begged to be sent to nurse him through his sickness."

"I asked her how she had heard of such a man being ill and under my care, and she showed me a newspaper paragraph which stated that Donald Ogden was lying very ill at the hotel. She had found, on inquiry, that I was the attending physician,

"I knew there must be some personal reason which urged her to apply for this special case, and asked her if there was not. She admitted there was; that she knew Mr. Ogden, but that he didn't know her."

"She assured me that she was most anxious he should get well."

"I had faith in her as an honest girl and a fairly good nurse, so I sent her to nurse Ogden, and promised not to let the patient know she had any interest in him other than a professional one."

"After she left the hotel, doctor, did she return to her boarding place on Maryland Avenue?"

"Oh, yes; but only to remove her few effects to some place unknown to her landlady."

"You know nothing of her past history, then?"

"Absolutely nothing. Yet in spite of everything, I am willing to vouch for her honesty and purity."

Nick got the address of the other nurse, whom he hunted up at once.

She could give him no further information, however.

"I relieved Mary at noon," said Mrs. Clark, "and if there was a visitor to the sick room during the forenoon I do not know it."

"When she didn't come back, I remained in her place, for the patient grew worse during the afternoon and sank rapidly till he died shortly after midnight."

"No, I know absolutely nothing about Miss Isabel. She was a girl any one would like, but inclined to be a little melancholy at times. She would talk on any subject but about herself. I think she had a history of which she was not, probably, very proud."

Without entering into a discussion with Mrs. Clarke on that point, Nick got a minute description of Mary Isabel, after which he returned to the hotel and went to bed, not, however, before he had left word at the office to be called, if any telegrams arrived for him during the night.

About five o'clock in the morning the expected telegram came. It was brought to his room. Nick lighted his gas and read it.

The message was from Chick, sent from Wilmington, and ran thus:

"Brooks sent message from Chester to his wife, No. — — — street, telling her to be on her guard, as he feared something was wrong."

Nick did not go back to bed. On the contrary, he rose, took a bath, dressed, and went out on the street.

He walked directly to the nearest station house and made himself known to the officer in charge. When he left the station house, a local detective went with him.

They proceeded to the vicinity of Brooks' house, a small cottage on a narrow back street.

"That is the place," said Nick, pointing out the cottage. "Keep a sharp watch on it. Note all the people who go in and out. As soon as possible after Brooks gets home manage to bring him to me at the hotel, but don't let his wife or any of his friends suspect that he has gone away other than by his own accord."

Nick returned to the hotel and ordered breakfast served in his room for three, at eight o'clock.

Then he sat down to wait for his assistants.

Chick came in first.

"You got my telegram, Nick?" was his first query.

"All right, Chick, and I've got Brooks' house under surveillance. Anything to report?"

"Not much. Brooks was talkative enough, and although he was undoubtedly worried about something, I couldn't get a word out of him which might in any manner bear on the case until we reached the depot in this city."

"Then what occurred?"

"As the passengers were leaving the station, Brooks' eyes followed a well-dressed lady who came through with us from New York.

"She was met at the gate by a cabman, who took her handbag, placed her in his carriage, and drove away.

"All this time Brooks stood watching her and scratching his head.

"Just as the carriage started away at full speed, Brooks slapped his hand on his leg and exclaimed:

" 'By golly, I hab it!'

" 'Have what?' I asked.

" 'I knowed I'd seed somebody befo' who 'minded me ob dat lady, but to sabe my brack soul I couldn't jes' now 'member who it was.'

" 'And of whom does she remind you?'

" 'Ob Mistah Kingdon, sah.'

" 'Tut! tut!' I exclaimed.

" 'Dat's all right, Mistah Thorne,' insisted the negro, 'but dat 'oman's face is 'nough like de missin' man's face to belong to his sistah, only she's dark enough a'most to be a cullahed pusson, an' he wur kinder light 'plexioned like.' "

"Did you notice the woman closely Chick?" inquired Nick.

"No; she was veiled when she came to the train. Her berth was already made up.

and she retired at once. She did not get up until we were almost into Washington. Brooks, it appears, succeeded in seeing more of her than I. I am convinced that the porter and conductor have no secret in common."

Nick, in turn, related what he had learned since he reached Washington.

"I have it, Nick!" suddenly exclaimed Chick. "What if my mysterious female passenger should be Mary Isabel, the missing nurse?"

Before Nick could reply, Patsy, still in his disguise of the sleeping-car porter, burst into the room.

"Hello, Patsy," greeted Nick. "You appear to be in a hurry."

"I am," panted the boy. "I've run away from my wife."

"Your what?"

"My wife—Mrs. 'Dad' Brooks. She was waiting for me at the depot, and great Scott! how she did lambast me for being such a fool as to send her a telegram like that, though I don't know anything about the telegram yet."

"She yanked me off as fast as she could. Refused to talk much, however, till we could get home, as people might hear."

"All she said was that the lady was waiting to see me, and from the lady's manner she was sure something had gone wrong."

"That's what you git foh' lettin' white trash lead you 'round by yo' nose, yo' fool nigger," she whispered.

"While I was studying how I could get away from her before she got me to her house, where the real Brooks might be waiting with a razor, she came to my rescue."

"Drap off at de corner dar an' fotch home a chuck steak fo' breakfast, an' don't you lose no time 'bout it, d'ye hear?"

"I heard and I drapped off at the corner. I went into the butcher shop, but I didn't take that chuck to the Brooks' residence."

"As soon as she was out of sight I cut, and here I am."

"And how about the trip down?" asked Nick.

"If Thorne knows anything about Kingdon's disappearance he does not share it with Brooks," said Patsy, positively.

"He asked me what the detective wanted to learn from me, and I told him mere facts, as you suggested."

"So far as Thorne is concerned, I found out very little. He's as close as an oyster. He was very pale most of the trip, and looked as if he really might be ill. I asked him if he was sick, but he declared it was nothing to worry about, but he didn't feel very well."

"He was feeling the after effect of that unexpected nap on the train the night before," said Nick, with a smile.

"How would a nap make him sick?" asked Patsy.

"The nap wouldn't, but the morphine in the cigar which put him asleep would."

"There was only one other thing I noticed along the way that might bear on our case, Nick. At Chester a man boarded the train who was dressed exactly like the man described by Kingdon to Thorne, who, the latter says, Kingdon asked him to look out for at Baltimore."

"Oh! The red-whiskered man in a brown suit and Alpine hat?"

"Yes. Well, such a man got on at Chester and left the train at Baltimore. He traveled in the smoking-car."

"I passed through once and saw him talking to the brakeman."

"I heard the man say to the brakeman:

"I tell you, you are mistaken. I was not on the train that trip."

"That is important, my boy," said Nick. "We must find the red-whiskered Baltimore man in the brown suit and Alpine hat. If

Thorne doesn't lie, Kingdon was interested in knowing whether that mysterious individual got on the train on the night of the puzzling disappearance."

"But how will we get him?" asked Chick.

"Through the brakeman, who probably knows him, since Patsy saw the two in conversation. At present——"

A tap on the door interrupted him. Nick himself responded. After looking out into the hall, he made a quick sign, and Patsy and Chick hastily disappeared into the bedroom.

Then Nick opened the door and in walked the local detective with the real "Dad" Brooks in charge.

Fright was written all over Brooks' black face. He recognized Nick at once as the man who questioned him in New York.

"Brooks," said Nick, without any delay in approaching his subject matter, "I am Nick Carter, the detective.

"Now, I know that you are concealing something from me which occurred night before last on your trip to New York in charge of the Domerset."

"Fo' de Lawd——"

"Stop," interrupted Nick. "You had a passenger on that trip who was not reported.

"He entered the car from the day coach after the train crossed the bay.

"You left your ladder for him opposite section six.

"He quietly climbed into upper six and pulled the curtains together.

"A little later on you came through and removed the ladder.

"Some time before the train reached Jersey City, this passenger succeeded in leaving the train without it being generally known he was aboard.

"That passenger can tell us what became of Lester Kingdon, and you can tell us who the passenger was."

"I might as well 'knowledge all, I reckon," Brooks chattered. "Eberyt'ing's done gone wrong. Eben my wife she done gone crazy."

"Crazy! Your wife crazy?"

"As a bedbug, sah. She sw'ars she done meet me dis mawnin' at de Baltimo' an' Ohio depot an' ride home wid me on de street cah, when I done come in on de Penn road.

"Den she gib me de debil fo' not bringin' home a chuck steak, as she told me, an' I sw'ar to goodness she hadn't no chance to say chuck to me once. Oh, she's as crazy as a bedbug.

"If I hadn't gone fur that chuck as quick as I did, I belieb dat nigger would hab done cut me wid a razer. But befo' I could get dat steak dis yar gemman yanked me away, an' now you tell me 'bout dat uppah six bizz——"

"Well! well!" cried Nick, cutting the chattering porter short. "There was an upper six passenger."

"Kerrect. Jes' as you've said, though how you knowed——"

"Who was he?"

"It wurn't a he, sah. It wur a woman!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE MYSTERY OF LOWER SIX.

"A woman?" repeated Nick. "A woman without skirts?"

"Dat's it, sah. She wur dressed as a man."

"Well, Brooks, you'll greatly benefit yourself and oblige me by telling all you know about this strange affair."

"I'm goin' to, sah. No use tryin' to beat 'bout de bush. An' I ain't done nuffin' wrong to nobody, nohow."

"We'll see about that. Now, a straight story, mind. If I catch you twisting up the

facts or keeping any of them back, I'll have you locked up for ninety-nine days."

"It am jes' like dis: Day afore yesterday affernoon while I wur snoozin' at home, my wife come an' tole me a lady was waitin' to see me. So I gits up an' goes out to meet her."

"She seemed innercent an' straight 'nuff, an' somehow knowed I wur de portah ob de Domerset, an' dat de cah wur goin' out dat night."

"She wanted to watch one ob de passengers, she said, widout him knowin' she wur on board, and axed me to smuggle her in up de road widout any one seein' her."

"I wouldn't heah 'bout it at fust, but she swore by her hopes ob salvation dat she didn't want to do no creature no harm. She offahed to gib me fifty dollars to help her t'rough."

"Dat didn't fase me, sah, but when she said she'd gib me fifty dollahs cash down an' fifty arter I got back to Washington if I worked it all right, I gub in an' 'cepted."

"Afore we lef' we had it all planned out."

"She wur to hab uppah six shu', an' dis wur de way it wur to be wuked:

"I done tol' her dat de bestest time to git into de cah would be arter we hed crossed de bay."

"I wur to lebe de laddah alongside six. Den I'd unlock de do' nex' de day cah."

"She'd be whar she could see me, an' would cum back, climb up in six and dar she'd be."

"Den I'd take de laddah away, an' dar she be ag'in."

"So she got de privilege from my wife to change her clo'es from a woman's rig to a man's."

"She lef' her dress an' sich wid Mrs. Brooks an' a gold watch as 'surance she would come back an' pay de odder fifty dollahs."

"Den she lef' airly in de ebenin' fur Baltimore', whar she said she'd board de day cah as we passed t'rough."

"Well, sah, eberyt'ing wuked splendiferously jes' as she'd planned."

"She slipped out into de day cah ag'in jes' befo' we got to Wilmington, an' dat's de las' I seed ob her."

"Don't you know where she can be found?"

"Deed I does. She am sweetly snoozin' in Mrs. Brooks' uppah bedroom, or wur when I lef'. Leastwise, dat's what I gathahed from my wife's brief an' unloosed remawks befo' she sent me fuh dat chuck steak."

"We are going to send for the lady."

Chick was soon on the street, in response to a hasty order from Nick, while Brooks was led away into an opposite room. Then Patsy, as his false double, came out of hiding and kept Nick company.

Nearly an hour elapsed before Chick returned.

An exceedingly handsome, plainly-dressed young woman accompanied him.

She was very pale, and a wild look came from her dark eyes as she entered the room.

When her gaze fell upon Patsy she gave a slight gasp, and, putting one hand out, caught at the back of a chair.

"Good. She thinks Patsy is Brooks," thought Nick.

"Please be seated, madame," spoke Nick, kindly, and she gladly complied.

"You probably can guess why you have been brought here," Nick began.

"Who are you, sir?"

"I am Nick Carter, the detective."

Her next words came calmly and without a moment's hesitation, greatly to the detective's surprise.

"And you are trying to discover what became of Mr. Kingdon?"

"You are right, miss. Can you tell me?"

"No. But perhaps I may aid you."

"What was he to you?"

"Nothing whatever."

"But you seem to have known him?"

"Only since the day of his disappearance."

"You mean to say you never saw him before that day?"

"Yes."

"Who are you?"

"Don't you know?"

"I can guess. Your name is Mary Isabel."

She merely nodded an affirmation.

"You never saw Kingdon until you met him in Mr. Ogden's room in this hotel the day before yesterday?"

"I never did."

She had admitted that Kingdon was with Ogden. That was something accomplished.

"What was Kingdon's business with Ogden, Miss Isabel?"

"I cannot tell you, sir."

"You mean you will not?"

"I said I could not. I was in the room five minutes while they were together, and the two men were locked up with each other for two hours."

"You left them alone by request?"

"I did."

"By request of whom?"

"Of Mr. Ogden."

"Why did you fail to tell others of Kingdon's visit?"

"Because Mr. Ogden asked me not to do so."

"Was that the only reason?"

"No."

"What other reason was there?"

She hesitated slightly, and then replied:

"I had no good opportunity; I did not return in the evening."

"Why not?"

"Because I left Washington that night."

"Ah, yes; for Baltimore, where you boarded the midnight train northbound."

She gave a reproving glance at Patsy; then sighed:

"As you say."

"Now, Miss Isabel, will you tell me why you made that strange journey in such a strange manner?"

"On one condition I will, and I promise that what I tell you of that trip will be of great interest to you in your search for Mr. Kingdon."

"What is your condition?"

"That after I tell you everything I know relative to Kingdon's disappearance, you will not press me for information which would have no bearing on the case you have in hand."

Nick hesitated only a moment before he replied:

"I grant your condition."

"Then I'll begin by telling you the object of my strange trip. I wanted to get something from Mr. Kingdon before he could reach New York with it."

"You mean your object was to rob him while he slept?"

"Scarcely that. But he had something in his possession which was not worth a pittance to a living soul except to me, and I was trying to—— Well, let us say—lose it for him."

"Did you get it?"

"I did."

"How?"

"Took it from the inside pocket of his coat."

"While he slept?"

"No, sir; after he had left the car," was the startling reply.

"Then you saw him leave?"

"You are mistaken, Mr. Carter. I did not."

Nick wrinkled his brow.

"Let us not beat about the bush any longer, Miss Isabel. Please come to the point which I am trying to reach," he said, somewhat testily.

"Willingly. To begin with, I saw him buy his sleeping-car ticket for lower six. I was satisfied that none of the uppers would be sold.

"Then I found out where the porter of the car lived, and I looked him up.

"I presume he has told you about the bargain I made with him," she added, nodding toward Patsy.

"Yes. You may skip that part," replied Nick.

"Well, the plan worked well. I was prepared with a sponge fixed to a wire, which I intended to lower, and by which I expected to apply chloroform after I was once assured he was asleep, in order to make his sleep most profound.

"I waited some time after getting into upper six.

"Just as I was about to cautiously peep down, I became aware that some one was moving around in the lower berth.

"This continued for five minutes, when, a current of cold air which came up in the rear of me, I realized that a window had been opened.

"By the rumbling of the wheels I knew we were crossing a bridge or trestle.

"Presently the curtains shook.

"I peeped out over the top and I saw——" She hesitated.

"Well, you saw—what?" urged Nick.

"I saw the sleeping-car conductor sneak out of the lower berth and hurry hastily out of the car," she exclaimed.

"Which way did he go?"

"Forward, toward the day coaches."

"That confirms Brooks' story," said Nick, in an undertone to his chief.

Nick did not answer, but urged Miss Isabel:

"Please proceed."

"After waiting perhaps ten minutes, and feeling assured that the conductor was not coming back, and realizing that everything below me was very quiet, I ventured to peer down into the berth."

"It was empty?" added Nick, as she again paused with dramatic effect.

"It had no occupant," though all of Mr. Kingdon's clothes were there as he had taken them off.

"I saw his coat hanging on a hook.

"Mindful of nothing but the object I was pursuing, I gently let myself down and secured from the coat pocket, where I saw him put it on the day before, the object I was after.

"Then, for the first time, it occurred to me that something strange and mysterious had happened in that berth.

"The occupant was missing. His clothes were all there. The conductor had just left the berth. One window was wide open.

"It had been opened while we were crossing a bridge.

"I knew it must have been the high bridge across the Susquehanna.

"Mr. Carter, it flashed on my mind just then that Kingdon's body had been shoved through that window and dropped scores of feet below into the water.

"I almost fainted.

"But a cool breeze blew in through the window and revived me.

"It also warned me of the danger of the open window, for it stirred the curtain.

"It might cause some of the train officials to look into the berth.

"That would mean the discovery of Mr. Kingdon's disappearance, which would also mean my discovery in the upper berth, before I could leave the train.

"Therefore, I closed the window and crawled back into my upper berth, where I

lay half scared to death until the train approached Wilmington.

"At that point the porter, as arranged, passed through and coughed to notify me where we were.

"I slipped out of my berth and succeeded in getting into the day coach unobserved, as I believed.

"I passed through into the smoking-car, intending to get off at the station just as the train was about to pull out, but something then occurred which induced me to stay on till we reached Chester."

"What was that?"

"I saw a man come out of the toilet room and walk out onto the platform ahead of me. The sight of him caused me to turn back, and as that was the only platform which was not vestibuled, I had no other way of getting off since the train was in motion."

"Did the man get off?"

"I guess so, for I saw him no more, and I remained on till I got to Chester."

"Why did he scare you?"

"I believed him to be some one shadowing me."

"Explain."

"As I came into the Camden depot at Baltimore, I had just about time to get through the gates and catch the train.

"Well, as I walked hastily through the waiting-room that man was standing there.

"He eyed me so that it made me feel uneasy.

"After I had reached the train I looked back and was relieved to see him walking away toward the street.

"It didn't seem possible that he could have got through the gate in time for the train.

"Yet, Mr. Carter, it was the same man who got off in front of me at Wilmington. I knew him by his peculiar beard and dress."

"Describe him."

"He was a small man, with sandy, cropped hair, a red beard, wore a brown suit, and a light-colored Alpine hat."

"By Jove!" whispered Chick. "Kingdon's shadow again."

"The man who Thorne says he saw leave the depot," commented Nick, thoughtfully in an undertone to his assistant.

Then, after reflecting a few moments, the detective continued:

"The man you saw leave the train at Wilmington, Miss Isabel, is our missing link. When we find him we will know the fate of Lester Kingdon."

"Let me go and bring the brake man here, then. He knows the man and can tell us where to find him," urged Patsy.

"You may go and fetch the brake man, my lad, but I'm not so sure that he knows where our man can be found."

There was a tap on the door. Nick went to see who it was.

He passed out into the hall. When he returned, a tall, distinguished-looking young man was with him.

The latter no sooner entered the room than Miss Isabel sprang to her feet with a cry.

The young man at sight of her stopped if shot at.

Only for a moment, however.

Then, as he threw out his arms, he exclaimed:

"Isabel, at last I have found you!"

Before he could reach her, the lady's body swayed, and she fell head upon the floor.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAN WITH THE RED BEARD AND BROWN SUIT.

The young man rushed forward and held the girl's head gently from the carpet.

"She is in a dead faint," was Nick's announcement, as he looked into her pale, turned face. "She was under a terrible nervous strain for half an hour before you came, and your unexpected entrance brought on a complete collapse."

He rang a bell and directed the boy who answered to send in the housekeeper or her assistant at once.

Then he picked up Miss Isabel's unconscious form, bore it into his bedchamber, and laid it on the couch.

By that time the housekeeper herself appeared.

Nick briefly explained the condition of the young lady in the other room and turned the latter over to the matronly care of the old woman.

After she had gone in to her charge, he closed the communicating door.

In the next place he whispered something into Patsy's ear, whereupon the latter picked up his hat and left the room.

Turning to the newcomer, Nick said:

"Will you kindly take a seat, Mr. Ogden?"

At the name Ogden, Chick gave the young man another quick, scrutinizing glance, and this thought flashed through his mind:

"Ogden, eh! The son of the dead man. She recognized the girl. She recognized him faintly. The girl acted as nurse for his father and followed the man who paid that last visit to the dying man's room."

Nick will soon be able to put this and that together, I think."

"They told me at the hotel office that you had arrived," explained Nick, "and I requested that they ask you to visit me here at your earliest convenience. The young man in there," nodding his head toward the room, "was giving me valuable information when you entered, on a subject about which you may furnish further light."

"How am I concerned in it, sir?"

"You are not; but your deceased father may have been. On the forenoon prior to his death, he had a secret visit in his sick-room from a man who, the following night, mysteriously disappeared."

"What was the man's name?"

"Lester Kingdon."

"Why, that was one of his lawyers!" cried Ogden, as his face lost color.

"I know it. Your father summoned him by telegraph. He came and remained alone with your father for two hours. Only one other person save themselves knew of Kingdon's visit to the sick-room until that other one told me."

"Who was the other one?"

"The nurse."

"Did the nurse know the object of the lawyer's visit?"

"If she did, she has informed no one. Can you guess what it was?"

"I fear I can. My father has threatened to disinherit me for disobedience. I suppose he fulfilled that threat."

"Made a will, eh, cutting you off?"

"I presume that is about the size of it," was the dogged reply.

"What was the difference between you and your father?"

"A matter of the heart. I was determined to marry a poor girl—a typewriter—but pure as an angel and a lady by instinct as well as training."

"She and I met at the office of a friend, where she was employed. We fell in love. She promised to marry me."

"When father heard of it, he was furious. For a certain reason he cannot bear the sight of a female typewriter. In vain I tried to induce him to call with me upon the young lady. I hoped if he saw her—talked to her—he would relent."

"But he would not even look upon her. She was a typewriter. That was enough."

"The young lady heard of my father's dislike to members of her craft and of his threat against me if I married her.

"As a result, she sent me a letter in which she gave me up and said good-by—being unwilling, as she expressed it, to ruin my life merely to gratify her love. I had always been rich, she said, and could not bear poverty. She had always been poor and could continue in that state.

"She disappeared without leaving a trace behind her.

"But she didn't know me. I defied my father even after she seemed lost to me, and ever since that day, four or five months ago, I have spent my time looking for her.

"This rekindled my father's wrath, and he has repeatedly asserted that unless I renounced the 'madness,' as he called it, he would cut me off without a penny."

"And you think he has done so just as you have found your sweetheart?"

"I see you understand that the young lady in there is the girl who made the sacrifice for my sake. Well, you are right. She is Isabel Kersey."

"Mary Isabel Kersey?" suggested Nick.

"Yes, though she never used the name 'Mary' unless when writing her name in full."

"She was known here in Washington as Mary Isabel, Mr. Ogden."

"You said she was giving you some valuable information about the missing lawyer?" exclaimed Ogden, as if under the influence of a new train of thought. "What did she know about it?"

"A good deal, sir. Miss Kersey followed him from Washington. She was on the same train from which he disappeared—the same sleeper, in the berth above that which he occupied. She even, while thus traveling, picked his pocket of something which he was carrying away, and with it left the train at Chester."

"What did she take from the pocket?"

"She will not tell. But when I inform you that Miss Kersey was the nurse who alone knew of the meeting of your father and the lawyer in his room, you may imagine what it was which Kingdon carried away, and which she relieved him as I have said."

"A will!" ejaculated young Ogden.

Nick made no reply.

"She—she had nothing to do with the disappearance?" suddenly exclaimed Ogden in some excitement.

"Nothing. Of that I'm sure."

"And she got the—the will, did you say?"

"She must have got what she said she went after, for no will was found in Kingdon's effects which he left on the train. In deed, she says she got what she followed him to get."

At this moment the door between the two rooms opened and Isabel Kersey herself appeared on the threshold.

Young Ogden fairly ran to meet her.

She did not repulse him, but submitted to his loving greeting with a silent happiness which she could not conceal.

Ogden gently led her to a chair and stood by her side with one of her hands in his own.

"Miss Kersey, I have learned from Mr. Ogden of your unselfish sacrifice in my behalf. It is needless to say, therefore, the nature of your pursuit of Kingdon, so that mysterious trip becomes more definite and certain."

He stopped speaking, but she made no reply.

"I am going to ask you, Miss Kersey, whether you were not called upon to witness a document in Mr. Ogden's room, which Kingdon drew up while he and your father were together?"

"Mr. Carter, I decline to answer," cried, slowly losing the little color which had returned to her face.

"It was that document which you saw Kingdon put into his pocket and which to get out of his possession you followed him on that trip toward New York."

She made no response.

"Have you that document, Miss Kersey?"

"The article which I took from Mr. Kingdon's pocket, Mr. Carter, is destroyed. No one save myself shall ever know what it was."

"Not even Mr. Ogden?"

"Especially not he."

"But when Kingdon is found——"

She turned a startled look upon Nick, who stopped his sentence and returned her stare.

"Mr. Kingdon, if found, will be dead," he half whispered.

"I am inclined to differ with you, Miss Kersey."

"You mean it?"

"I do most decidedly. I have every reason to believe Kingdon is alive and will turn ——"

"Then——then——he might——he would——"

"He would, of course, do what you refuse to do——tell what the thing was which you took from his pocket. Now will you tell us what it was?"

"No."

Slowly turning to her lover, she put both arms around his neck, looked up into his eyes, and, unmindful of the presence of the two detectives, said:

"Jules, you have often urged me to marry you, offering to sacrifice everything for the happiness it would give you to call me your wife."

"And I meant every word of it, little woman," he asserted, warmly.

"Are you still of that mind?"

"I am doubly so now."

"Will you marry me now——right away?"

"Heaven bless you, yes!"

"And ask me no questions about that——"

"t——"

"I'll ask you nothing only to love me and become mine for all time."

"Then let us go. The sooner I can call you husband the better it will please me."

The two lovers left the room without stopping to ask anybody's consent, or to say *au revoir*. Chick looked at Nick as the door closed behind the reunited couple, expecting to see a frown on his chief's face.

Instead, a broad smile illumined Nick's phiz, and a little chuckle rattled in his throat.

"A woman in love is as transparent as glass," he said, turning to his assistant.

"Do you think she destroyed the will, Nick?" asked Chick.

"No. For a good reason, too."

"What reason?"

"There was no will."

"But she would not deny that she witnessed a document which Kingdon drew up for Ogden."

"I know. She did witness such a document. She also believed it was a will. To get hold of this will and destroy it, she followed Kingdon. She succeeded——got the document, and has destroyed it."

"Then why are you so sure it was no will?"

Nick smiled at his assistant in a way that was nettling.

"The minute she was made to believe that Kingdon might turn up alive, she wanted to marry Ogden at once."

"That's so, but what's that got to do with it?"

"Everything my boy. Mary Isabel Kersey is a girl with a mind as well informed as women usually get. Had it been a will which she destroyed that would be the end of it. Kingdon's unsupported testimony would not be sufficient to establish it in a court of equity."

"Well."

"But his sworn testimony would, in the absence of the document itself, be sufficient, together with circumstantial facts, to establish a——"

"A what?"

"A confession."

"Great Scott, Nick! What do you mean?"

"I've been raking up the past in my memory in the light of what we've recently heard," said Nick, contemplatively.

"Among other things, I recall the fact that a typewriter—a young and handsome girl—who was employed in the brokerage office of Ogden & Son, some three years ago, committed suicide. At least, that was the verdict of the coroner.

"She took poison in the office. Her body was found there.

"Soon afterward Ogden retired from business.

"His son has just told us about the old man's dislike for typewriters, which must have antedated the death of that girl.

"There was some reason for it, Chick.

"I remember now that gossip at the time connected the old man's name with the dead typewriter.

"She had no friends, yet dressed and lived in a style away beyond her known source of income.

"Chick, you can bet every dollar you have laid away in bank that old Ogden poisoned that typewriter when her hold on him became too burdensome.

"The business preyed on his mind so much that he grew to hate all girls who followed his victim's mode of earning a living.

"Hence his threat against the son.

"When he found he was going to die, he made a confession. Had it written out by his lawyer, signed and witnessed by Kingdon and the nurse.

"If it had been a will, a second witness

would have been needed, inasmuch as Kingdon would not have been available in that capacity.

"Miss Kersey believed it was a will.

"To save her lover's fortune, she took these extraordinary risks.

"When she found it was a confession instead, which pronounced the father a murderer, she destroyed it and resolved to keep the secret, believing that Kingdon had been killed and pitched through the car window into the Susquehanna by the sleeping-car conductor.

"As soon as I raised even a doubt in her mind of Kingdon's death, she resolved to marry Ogden at once."

"I see now," interrupted Chick. "She was afraid he would refuse to let her share his disgrace if it became known that her father had died a murderer."

"Exactly."

"Say, Nick, was that her object in applying to Dr. Morse for the position of nurse to old Ogden—to steal his will?"

"Not at all, my boy. Mary Isabel Kersey can tell you, if she will, that she sought that place for the purpose of trying to win the old man's regards for her, to overcome her repugnance to at least one ex-typewriter, and pave the way to a reconciliation with marriage between her and his son."

"She did not succeed, though, Nick."

"Evidently not. She could make no impression on her crusty patient, I should say, and so never revealed her identity."

"She's a dandy, Nick. But now about Kingdon. You don't believe his body was chucked into the Susquehanna, then?"

"Wait a moment. Here is Patsy with the brakeman. Get into the other room, quick."

As Nick spoke, Patsy, still disguised as "Dad" Brooks, entered the room in company with a roughly-dressed young man.

The latter looked at Nick, and spoke right out:

"Are you de feller as wants to chin me 'bout somet'in' as happened on de road las' night. Dat's what. 'Dad' hur says is de 'blacket.'"

"Yes. I want to ask you about a certain passenger with whom 'Dad' saw you talking after the train left Wilmington."

"Well, fire away. I'm in a hurry. Me 'times' val'able. See?"

"This man had sandy hair, a red beard, wore a brown suit, and a light Alpine hat. Know him?"

"Know dat feller? Ah! I sh'd say so. Why, dat's Tom McGovern. He lives in Baltimore, but has a meat store in Chester. Why, he's been goin' over de road every sadder night fur a year. Know Tom McGovern an' his brown suit! Say! Tom's wore dat suit fur a year, and now he has a new one jest like it. See?"

"Had he the new suit on last night?" queried Nick.

"Naw! but he had de night afore. Yet dese bloke tried to make me believe dat he hadn't went up on our train dat night. I had a notion to punch his head fur tryin' to deny it. Dinged if I don't believe he was ashamed of the new suit, fur he kep' mighty close till we got right to Wilmington, an' he didn't get off till we wur pullin' out. Didn't go to Chester, eider."

"He kem outen de gents' closet an' made a break fur de ground afore I could get 'ar. Dat was de only time I seed him on trip. I'd a believed he'd been hidin' all dat time in de closet of de car ef it wasn't for one t'ing."

"What's that?"

"Why, ten minutes afore I seed de sleepin'-car conductor, Thorne, go in dat same set. What he cum all de way to dat set for puzzles me. An' anodder t'ing sort

o' stumps me. I see Thorne go in, but not come out, an' I see McGovern come out, but not go in. I guess I mus' have dropped off in a doze betwixt times, though I'd a-swore I wur awake de whole time."

Nick gave the voluble brakeman a cigar and a drink of whisky and dismissed him.

"Chick," said the great detective, as the latter came from the inner room and Patsy closed the door behind the trainman, "that man has furnished me with an important link of evidence."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUITS PICKED UP BY NICK ON THE BOWERY.

Patsy was sent into Nick's bedroom to wash the black from his face.

While he was thus engaged, Nick drew Brooks into a friendly conversation, and at last referred to the female passenger who bore such a strong resemblance to Lester Kingdon.

"Ef I'd a-only got onto dat 'semblance soonah, sah, by golly, I'd a-watched her closah," declared Brooks.

"She left the depot in a carriage?"

"Yaas, sah."

"Do you think you would know the carriage driver who took her away if you saw him again?"

"Would I know him? Would I know Mart Higgins? Why, I knows him like a book."

"The carriage man is no stranger to you, then?"

"Golly! I guess not. Mart's been driven that team for more'n fo' years, an' he mos'ly hangs roun' de depots an' hotels."

"Where can we find him now?"

"'Bout dis time I spects he'll be at home feedin' up."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"Bet your boots."

"Then take me to his house."

They didn't find Higgins at his house, however. A red-cheeked, pudgy little woman, with a baby on one arm, met them at the door.

She had very evidently been crying. Her eyes were red and swollen.

"No; Mr. Higgins is not at home," she said, in answer to Nick's inquiry. "He's not in town."

"When did he go away?" inquired the detective, at the same time checking Brooks' readiness to "cut it."

"Not more than an hour ago."

"Where has he gone?"

"To New York. He sails for England tomorrow morning on the *Etruria*. It's all very sudden, sir."

"What is?"

"Why, you see, sir, Mart has fell heir to a snug fortune over there. I forgot how many thousand dollars it'll make. He jest got word to-day from some New York lawyers. They sent him money to come right on and sail with one of them for England tomorrow to claim what's been left him.

"So Mart had only time to leave me enough money from that the lawyers sent him to live on till he comes back or sends for me. But come in, sir, and set down. I'm so broke up over Mart's suddin' goin' away that I can't be polite. We've never been parted since we were married."

Nick declined the invitation and then asked:

"Do you know the name of his lawyers in New York, who sent him the message?"

"I forgot to ask. But I think one of 'em must be named Kingdon."

"Why do you think so?"

"Well, because a gentleman and lawyer by that name has visited Mart here at the house a number of times during the last five or six months. He and Mart seemed to get

right intimate. He called to see Mart ag evening before last, about nine o'clock."

"I'm not surprised," was Nick's thought.

A few minutes later he was on his back to the hotel, accompanied by "Da Brooks.

"Is this Higgins a large or a small n Brooks?" asked Nick, as they proceeded town.

"He's larger dan Mistah Kingdon, sa was the reply. "Mart's jes' about de ob dat lawyah, White, dat was at de offi New York when you axed me all dem q tions."

"They've gone on the twelve-fif train," muttered Nick, looking at his wa

"We can't get away till four. But I g that will be time enough."

Then he once more drew Brooks into versation, and they hastened up town.

At the hotel he ran up against yo Ogden.

"Congratulate me, Mr. Carter," cried latter, extending his hand. "Though I lost my father, I've found a wife."

"You are married, then?" respon Nick, accepting the proffered hand. "Pat congratulate you, Mr. Ogden, with all to heart. Your wife is one of God's nob creatures.

"I'm going to leave for New York sho Before I go I should like to say good-bi your wife."

"I will send her to you in the recep room. We, too, shall go to New York the funeral."

Shortly afterward Nick was saying by to the new Mrs. Ogden. They alone, and the detective, as he held young lady's hand, spoke kindly and low tone:

"I want you to be entirely happy, Ogden, and I know you cannot be t long as you fear that Lester Kingdon turn up and give your secret to the wo

"But you said you believed Mr. Kingdon would come back to his friends."

"He is almost sure to come back, but I promise you that no one shall ever know from him anything that he learned at the bedside of your last patient. So be as happy in this hour as you deserve."

Her eyes filled with tears. She pressed Nick's hands in both of her own, and faltered:

"Heaven bless you, sir. You are indeed a noble gentleman whom reputation makes great."

It was nearly nine o'clock that evening when Nick, Chick and Patsy landed from Congressional Limited in Jersey City.

All three took the Cortlandt street ferry. On their way across North River, Nick said to Chick:

"Lawyer White is a bachelor and lives at Vendome. If he is not there, they can probably tell you where to find him. Don't waste up the hunt for him till you have found him, then bring him straight to the house."

"If you get to the house before I do, wait. Don't let him get away from you."

Patsy and Chick took the elevated train uptown, when they reached the New York depot.

Nick walked across the city and entered Bowery.

His destination was the store of a costumer and theatrical outfitter.

He found the proprietor disengaged, and accorded a private interview with the lawyer.

The interview lasted half an hour.

When the great detective took a Third Avenue elevated train up town.

It was nearly half-past ten when he reached his house.

Patsy met him with the news that Chick had not yet reported.

Just before midnight Chick's carriage

drove up to the curb in front of the house, and Nick's patience had meanwhile been sorely tried.

Chick had his man in tow, and ushered the lawyer into the presence of Nick and Patsy.

"I had quite a hunt of it," explained Chick. "Mr. White had gone to the theatre with a friend, and my search for him was rather unfruitful."

"I had to wait, therefore, until they returned to their club, and here we are."

"And now that I am here, Mr. Carter, will you get through with me as soon as possible? I've a friend with me as a guest who sails on the *Etruria* to-morrow morning at eight o'clock. I am anxious to give him as much of my time as possible. We expect to make a night of it."

"Who is this friend?" inquired Nick, very much interested.

"An old college mate. We were indeed room mates at Yale, and in the same class. He has lived in California for the past twenty years, where he became very rich. He arrived from the West at six o'clock last evening, and I am showing him the town during his brief stay."

"You'll have to let your friend wait an hour or two, I regret to say, Mr. White," replied Nick, as he motioned the lawyer to take a seat. "I presume your interest in the fate of your partner is not inconsiderable?"

"Bless my soul, no. Have you found any trace of Kingdon?"

"You shall judge for yourself, after I've told you what I learned in Washington."

Then Nick related the death of Ogden, senior, Kingdon's mysterious visit to the sick man at the hotel, the confession of the nurse who followed him, and the story of the woman who resembled Kingdon in features, as well as the stories of Martin Higgins' sudden English inheritance, and the

mysterious movements of the man in the brown suit and gray Alpine hat.

When he paused, as if he had finished, White, who had been listening intently all the time, exclaimed:

"What in Heaven's name does it portend, Mr. Carter? I can't make head or tail of it."

"Well, I'll now help you out. That hack driver, Martin Higgins, with whom your partner became so intimate, is a person of your size.

"You are a man who can easily be imitated in appearance, the size being the same. A black, bushy false beard, a pair of spectacles, and a suit of clothes similar to those you wear would make Higgins easily mistaken for you—after dark."

"Good heavens, Carter! What does that mean?"

"It means that this Martin Higgins, coachman, is about to personate you under the skilled guidance of another—a master hand at plotting."

"Who?"

"Your partner, Lester Kingdon."

White could do nothing but sit and stare at Nick in hopeless mystification.

"Let me now show you how I ran your partner's plans to earth," said Nick:

"My first definite clew was that big valise.

"The unreasonable size for such a trip struck me forcibly from the start.

"When I examined it in the railroad office, I found it not one-half full. All that was in it could have been carried in a much smaller bag.

"But there were unmistakable signs about the hand trunk that it had recently been quite well filled.

"Brooks, the porter, confirmed this, and when I called his attention to the matter, while coming away from Higgins' house yesterday, Brooks remembered that the valise seemed much lighter when he carried it from

the car to the company's office, after the disappearance, than it was when he carried it into the car at Washington the night before.

"He also recollected that at Kingdon's request he left the valise setting alongside the berth when he made up the passenger's bed."

"And all this means what?" asked White.

"It means that the valise originally contained more clothes than what we found in it—a full suit from the skin out, including shoes and hat—the suit which he wore when he left the sleeper.

"The nurse thought she saw Thorne, the sleeping-car conductor, leave lower six and go forward.

"The porter also declared that Thorne went into the day coaches.

"Thorne, however, declares he was asleep in the state-room nearly all the way from Baltimore to Philadelphia. The result, by the way, of a drugged cigar which Kingdon gave him.

"The brakeman saw Thorne, as he will swear, enter the closet of the smoking-car.

"That's the last any one saw of the man dressed like Thorne.

"It was really Kingdon.

"He had, in that valise, a suit the counterpart of the one worn by Thorne, and a second suit of underclothes, a pair of shoes, a cap, and several other things.

"He and Thorne were about the same size.

"A wig and false mustache made the disguise close enough to answer his purpose.

"The noise which the nurse heard in his berth was caused by his donning his conductor's suit.

"He didn't know that any one was in the upper berth.

"No one was there when the train left Baltimore.

"When he was ready to leave the berth

he opened the window. That would suggest suicide.

"Unfortunately for him, the nurse closed the window.

"It must have puzzled him to find no account in the newspapers of the window's being open in number six.

"Dressed as Thorne, he passed forward to the smoker.

"In his frequent trips over the road he became familiar with Thorne's habits.

"The drugged cigar made sure of Thorne's quietude.

"Luck was with him. Had not Brooks unlocked the door of the sleeper for the nurse and left it for her retreat, Kingdon would have met with a repulse to his plans at that spot, for he had no key.

"As it was, he walked through to the smoking-car and entered the closet. That's the last of Thorne, the counterfeit."

"What became of him?" inquired White.

"You heard Thorne tell about Kingdon asking him to watch for a sandy-haired, red-whiskered man in a brown suit and gray Alpine hat at Baltimore, and let him know if such a person got on the train?"

"Yes."

"You heard Thorne tell how he saw such a man at the depot who, however, did not board the train?"

"True."

"I've told you how the nurse also noticed the same man in the depot?"

"Yes! yes!"

"We know, too, that the nurse and the brakeman will swear that this man in the brown suit got off that train at Wilmington, while the brown-suited man himself swears he was not on the train."

"Ah!"

"Remember that the brakeman says his friend, McGovern, had on a new brown suit that night."

"I see! I see! The man who came out of the closet and left the train at Wilmington was Kingdon?"

"It was."

"He changed clothes again in the closet?"

"No. He turned them."

"What?"

"That valise gave me another clew. In rummaging around among its contents I found a small card—the business card of a theatrical wardrober on the Bowery.

"The card had probably been slipped into the pocket of a vest or coat and fell out without Kingdon knowing of its existence.

"I went to this costumer to-night for an explanation, and got it.

"He remembers making a suit for a customer who claimed to belong to a dramatic company in which he played three characters.

"The suit was a reversible one. One side was the uniform of a sleeping-car conductor. The other was of brown material.

"The man also got a conductor's cap and a gray Alpine hat.

"He further secured a heavy black mustache, a red beard, a black, bushy beard, a wig of sandy hair, and one of black hair, besides some dark stain for the face.

"When he went to the closet, he reversed the coat and trousers, changed wigs, put on the full red beard instead of the black mustache, and replaced the cap with the Alpine hat.

"When he came out to get off at Wilmington, he was a good counterfeit of McGovern, whom he had studied on some of his trips up and down the road.

"He knew that McGovern was in the habit of going up and down between Baltimore and Chester on that train and always rode in the smoking-car.

"That was why he wanted to be sure McGovern was not aboard on that particular night."

"He got off at Wilmington for fear he might be spoken to for McGovern at Chester.

"Thus, as he thought, he had completely lost his identity, and every one would consider him dead."

"But what did he do after he got off at Wilmington?"

"I told you that he represented to the costumer that he played three characters in that dramatic company."

"So you did."

"The third was that of a female. The costumer fitted him out as a woman in a traveling suit. His small form and effeminate face made that disguise easy.

"The female rig was somewhere in Chester, I suppose, and there he got his third disguise.

"As a woman, he came to New York and remained hidden all night, when he went to Washington, and was, no doubt, worried to find that Brooks was the porter of the car on the other road, and Thorne was the conductor, as he believed.

"He would have been more worried than ever had he known that my chief assistant was the conductor who punched his berth ticket and gave him his check.

"At Washington he was met by a man whom he somehow persuaded to help him carry out his scheme."

"The man Higgins?" exclaimed White.

"Yes. It was Higgins' size and manner of walk which probably suggested the idea to use the man as an accomplice. A pair of spectacles, a bushy black beard, and a suit of clothes like you wear would make out of Higgins a fair counterfeit of you in appearance."

"Clothes, did you say?" gasped White.

"I said clothes. For the costumer made a third suit or outfit for a friend of Kingdon's, a much larger man than he is.

"From the description, I am sure it was a duplicate of the suit you wore yesterday morning, even to the coat with the high collar, and the soft felt hat."

"In Heaven's name, Mr. Carter, what does it mean?" cried White, still using that set question.

"It means that this man is to impersonate you for some daring purpose under Kingdon's direction.

"It means that we must decide what the scheme is, and quickly, for they are both in New York to-night," said Nick.

White sprang from his chair as if some one had touched him with a live electric wire.

"I see it!" he gasped. "The safe!"

"The safe? What safe?"

"The safe in our office. My friend from California has two hundred thousand dollars there in Bank of England notes to take with him to-morrow."

"And Kingdon knew this?"

"No. How could he? It was a secret between me and my old friend.

"You see, he wrote to me a week before he started and asked me to get the money exchanged for him. He sent me a draft for the amount. I was to exchange it for English money and put it in my safe so he could get it in the morning, as the *Etruria* sails before the banks open."

"That is a strange transaction, Mr. White."

"Not when you understand it.

"On the *Etruria* will be an Englishman who owns valuable mining interests which my friend wishes to possess.

"For certain reasons he does not want the Englishman to know of his desires in that direction, while the latter is in America.

"He is anxious, also, to close the deal if he can, before the Englishman lands on the other side.

wa "Therefore, when he goes abroad he will
da ve the cash on hand to close the bargain,
ig he can drive it, during the voyage.

"For politic reasons, he wanted to make
ha je journey from San Francisco to Liverpool
ha the Englishman's company.

"He knew the latter would reach New
at York last evening and sail in the morning,
ignd he didn't want to carry so much cash
cross the continent.

he "Therefore he explained all and called on
me to help him, as I have related."

"And the money is in your safe now?"

ne "Yes."

ic "Perhaps."

"What?"

"We have no time to lose, White. Quick!
Come with me."

"Where?"

"To your office. We may be too late as it
s. Kingdon and his tool are after that two
e hundred thousand dollars."

CHAPTER VII.

TWO PASSENGERS CAME BACK.

e They got a cab and hurried down town.

y On the way White insisted that Kingdon
knew nothing about the two hundred thou-
sand dollars, and if he did, could not get
into the building or office, as he had no keys.

e "He has somehow found out—seen that
letter from your friend," asserted Nick.

"As for keys, he didn't fail to have dupli-
cate sets made before he left his old ones in
the sleeping-car. The safe combination has
not been changed since he disappeared, has
it?"

White only groaned.

They left the carriage several blocks from
the building in which White's office was
situated and approached cautiously.

The street was deserted, and everything
was quiet.

On the lower floor of the building they

met the night watchman, who looked at
White rather queerly.

"Any one been here to-night, Dan?" the
merchant asked, in a tone that slightly
trembled.

"No, sir," was the reply, with a suspicious
cough.

"Tell us the truth, my man," said Nick.
"I'm an officer, and it would be best to not
keep anything back from us or to lie."

The watchman bristled up at once, and
growled:

"Then let him answer his own questions.
I was a fool to be taken in so."

"What do you mean?" cried White, turn-
ing on the watchman.

"Oh, none of that!" growled Dan. "You'll
not get me into no trouble for a ten-dollar
bill. There's your dinged money. I don't
want it," and he threw a banknote at
White's feet.

Nick picked it up.

"Somebody gave you this to-night?" he
inquired.

"He give it to me," muttered Dan, scowl-
ing at White. "He came sneakin' in here
with a woman all muffled up. I ketched him
tryin' to get up-stairs with her. Then I
was silly enough to be shet up with a measly
old ten-dollar bill. But I'll not git into no
trouble for no ten dollars, an' he'll run no
more women in here while I'm watchman,
if this doesn't lose me my job as it is."

Nick whispered to White to move on a
bit. Then he questioned Dan.

"They came in about eleven o'clock,
an' were up-stairs half an hour, I guess,
after which they left. I was surprised, for
Mr. White never did that way before."

"I'll see that no harm comes to you out of
it," encouraged Nick, "and we'll make it
more of an object to keep mum about the
little escapade."

So saying, he held a one-hundred-dollar

bill before Dan's eyes and then stuffed it into the latter's vest pocket.

Turning to White, he motioned the latter to lead the way up stairs.

They were soon in White's private office.

The safe was opened.

The money, of course, was gone.

"Too late!" groaned White, sinking into a seat.

"Not by a jugful! We'll get the man and the money yet or my name isn't Nick Carter."

"Where'll you find them?"

"On board the *Etruria*, when she sails down the bay to-morrow morning."

"Why, surely Kingdon will not go aboard the ship on which he knows my friend intends to sail."

"Won't he, though? Kingdon expects, naturally, that in the discovery of the loss of his money your friend will let the *Etruria* sail and be blessed. Don't make a mistake. He and Higgins will be passengers on the *Etruria*."

On the way up town he cautioned White to not let his friend know of the loss until after they went to the office for the money in the morning.

When the *Etruria* sailed at eight o'clock next morning, White's California friend was not aboard, much to the surprise of the Englishman with whom he had traveled across the continent.

But Nick, well disguised as an East India missionary, was among those who waved good-by to the crowd on the pier.

When the pilot was dropped outside the bar, the passengers on deck were surprised to see the missionary and a pale-looking

young woman passenger also lowered the boat.

The captain explained that at the last moment he had been persuaded to return, and as to all appearance, there was only one to be persuaded, the idea prevailed that the girl had followed the missionary and him to turn back at the last moment.

Of course, Nick had the two hundred thousand dollars, as well as Kingdon.

He dispatched his business so quickly with Kingdon that Higgins, who was already sick in his state-room, did not know what happened, and was allowed to continue the voyage across.

Nick didn't want him. It might have caused undue publicity to return to New York with the man who looked so much like White.

Kingdon broke down completely and made a full confession.

His original plot was to merely disappear completely and get away from his unloving wife.

Then he accidentally came across the Californian's letter, and the plan was enlarged as to give him possession of the two hundred thousand dollars at the same time. Of the sum Higgins was to have twenty-five thousand dollars and passage paid for his family to England.

He admitted that the document which Isabel Kersey took from his pocket was Ogden's confession of having poisoned his typewriter, who had him hopelessly involved. Like all men facing death with a secret sin on his mind, Ogden thought he would leave the world more easily if he made a clean breast of it.

ed Nick kept his promise to the brave wife
bung Jules Ogden, but to do it he had to
ast Kingdon go scot-free.

After all, it is best," he explained to
te. "Kingdon's wife would be dis-
ed, young Ogden would be disgraced,
and it would not help you any."

o, with the promise that he would keep
th Ogden's secret and never return, King-
was put upon a vessel sailing for Cal-
ta, and none but a select few knew that
y s mystery of his disappearance was ever
wl covered.

he railroad manager was taken into
ck's confidence, however, in order that
ha orne might not suffer under a charge of
N negligence.

Meantime the brakeman of 514 and Tom
Govern never meet on those "owl" trips
na m Balitmore to Chester that they don't
arrel and call each other liars over that
pe puted event of the night when the pas-
ov ger in lower six so mysteriously disap-
ared.

THE END.

We desire to call the special attention of
re e readers of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY to
tl r new publication, THE SHIELD WEEKLY,
or full announcement of which is made on the
il xt page. We are certain that all lovers of
od detective stories will be well pleased
Cith this publication, and urge you to buy
a copy or two from your newsdealer and
llarn its merits.

The first number, which will be ready
December 5th, is entitled, "Inspector Watt's
reat Capture; or, The Case of Alvord, the
mbezzler," which gives a complete and
raphic history of the events which led to

the capture of this bold embezzler by the
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